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For Immediate Release

LA Lakers Superstar Formerly Known as Ron Artest Donates \$55,000 to Queens-Based Child Center of NY

Hometown Hero Takes a Stand for Children's Mental Health

Queens, NY, September 2011 – At a ceremony in Los Angeles last Tuesday, the basketball player formerly known as Ron Artest, announced that he will be donating \$55,000 to The Child Center of NY--based in Woodside, Queens, not far from the Queensbridge projects where he grew up. The event came only a few days after he legally changed his name to Metta World Peace.

Mr. World Peace—who has spoken candidly about his childhood struggles – said he wanted to help Queens' kids facing the same problems he faced as a child. "We are so grateful to Mr. World Peace," said The Child Center's executive director Sandra Hagan. "He overcame tremendous obstacles but never forgot what it's like to be a kid in trouble in need of help. We hope he inspires others to speak out about mental health—an issue that most would rather hide or ignore. He is truly saving lives."

The Child Center will use this gift for:

- Crisis-intervention to prevent the need for psychiatric hospitalization by stabilizing kids who suffer from serious mental health problems, such as bipolar illness, depression, severe ADHD, and behavior disorders.
- A new initiative that will place mental health screening on-site at after-school programs in Queens. The goal is to identify children in need and get them help sooner, rather than later – before problems are more difficult to fix.

"When I was 13, our house burned down and my mom and dad separated, and from then on I was really agitated and started getting in a lot of trouble," he told The Daily News. "My mom told me I had to see a counselor. He helped me a lot. Without him I don't know where I'd be."

Funds for the donation came from the auction of World Peace's NBA championship ring, last December for over a half million dollars.

Founded in 1953, The Child Center of NY is a leading nonprofit children's agency that serves 18,000 children each year. Its mission is to help at-risk children and youth succeed in life. The Child Center's programs include early childhood education, mental health counseling, child abuse prevention, and youth development--in 35 languages at over 80 locations throughout Queens.